

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 11 MARCH 2018

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

The South African Radio League broadcasts a news bulletin each Sunday in Afrikaans as well as English, at 08:15 and 08:30 Central African Time respectively, on HF as well as on various VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. The bulletin is relayed via Echolink by ZS6JPL. A podcast is available on the League website.

Audio and text bulletins may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you can also sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news, today:

ACCOMMODATION FOR THE 2018 NATIONAL CONVENTION

JUST IMAGINE VHF ACTIVITY FROM AFRICAN STATES FROM BELOW THE EQUATOR

and

ANTENNA ISSUES WITH VINCE HARRISON AT THE NEXT SDR WORKSHOP

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

ACCOMMODATION FOR THE 2018 NATIONAL CONVENTION

The SARL National Convention will be held on the weekend of 13 to 15 April 2018. The AGM will be held at The Farm Inn which is a privately-owned Country Hotel and Conference Centre on the eastern outskirts of Pretoria, just 20 minutes from Central Pretoria, 45 minutes from OR Tambo International Airport and 50 minutes from Johannesburg. The Farm Inn is a great getaway, an ideal conference venue or the perfect setting for your wedding. The Farm Inn has that special something extra - a wildlife sanctuary within the city.

It is important that SARL members book their accommodation for the weekend as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment. Farm Inn has various accommodation types available from Deluxe to Economy rooms at various rates. There is still ample accommodation available for the weekend and members are requested to mention that they are attending the SARL AGM when making their booking. Upon confirmation received this morning, it can be confirmed that there is still ample accommodation available over the weekend and members are urged to ensure they book their accommodation sooner rather than later. Accommodation can be booked online at www.farminn.co.za or by phone on +27 12 809 0266/77.

There is also various alternative guesthouse accommodation available around the immediate vicinity of the Farm Inn which can be used as alternative accommodation should you not wish to stay at the Farm Inn. To name but a few - Casa Flora Guesthouse, The Links guesthouse, The Lakes Executive, Villa Africa and Peter's Guesthouse. If you are planning to bring your caravan, you can try the Nkwe Resort. The URLs for all these places can be found in the SARL Communication dated 7 March 2018.

JUST IMAGINE VHF ACTIVITY FROM AFRICAN STATES SOUTH OF THE EQUATOR

Hans van den Groenendaal, ZS6AKV, presenter of the AR Today programme, stated that Sentech, who broadcasts Sunday morning programmes to the African States in English, requests more technical and experimental data about amateur radio. This could open up a vast field in VHF experiments, which could be of great benefit for their southern neighbours in the RSA.

Many of the radio amateurs in the African States own HF transceivers that are already equipped for operation on 50 MHz. In those countries with FM repeaters on 144 MHz amateurs will be able to operate on this band, but if the transceiver is not all-mode then you will have to acquire a SSB rig for future long-distance experiments.

The 50 MHz band, or Magic band, produces the strongest signals over the entire radio spectrum on most propagation modes. This means that 50 MHz could provide strong Sporadic-E contacts across Southern Africa and via Meteor Scatter. While 144 MHz, the Tropo band, yields the longest distances across the oceans via Tropo Ducting, but is still the best on Tropo Enhancement and Tropo Scatter. The longest distances on 144 MHz of almost 5 000 km was recorded across the Pacific Ocean and 3 245 km between Reunion Island and Port Elizabeth across the Indian Ocean. On 144 MHz you could often record the longest distances via Tropo Ducting along the African coasts or even inland.

ANTENNA ISSUES WITH VINCE HARRISON AT THE NEXT SDR WORKSHOP

The next SDR workshop will be held at the NARC on Saturday 17 March 2018 starting at 9 AM. Learn more about what antenna to use for the noise monitoring project. At the workshop, there will be a report back on the SARL RF Noise Monitoring project. Other subjects covered include how to automate the uploading of the data to the server and an introduction to GNU radio by Anton Janovsky, ZR6AIC. The cost is R50 for SARL and AMSATSA members and R100 for non-members. Registration details are on www.amsatsa.org.za or link from the SARL Home page. There will be no facilities at the workshop to handle cash.

You are listening to a news Bulletin of the South African Radio League.

EARLY BIRD BOOKINGS FOR THE AMSATSA SPACE SYMPOSIUM OPEN ON MONDAY

Bookings for the annual AMSATSA Space Symposium which will be held on 19 May 2018 at the Innovation Hub in Pretoria opens on Monday. The symposium features interesting subjects including development of a new SDR transponder, building a ground station to operate Amateur Radio first geostationary satellite Es'hail-2, a BACAR-ready 10 GHz beacon to exercise your Es'hail-2 receiver, a practical approach to improving modular system reliability, FunCube Data and some of its secrets and a progress report on KletsKous and its next generation transponder and systems. Get the booking form and details on www.amsatsa.org.za.

PACIFIC AMATEUR RADIO DRONE KH6JF/MM USING FT8

There is currently a chance to work some really rare grids. HF Voyager is an ocean-going drone currently making its way from Hawaii to California that can carry out amateur radio contacts in several digital modes. Onboard in a waterproof container is an Elecraft KX3 and a Raspberry Pi computer enabling a variety of digital modes to be used. On 6 March, FT8 was enabled and the drone was in grid square CL51 operating with the callsign KH6JF/mm. You can read the full story at <https://ae5x.blogspot.co.uk/2018/03/hf-voyager-ocean-going-drone-with-kx3.html>

DURBAN AMATEUR RADIO CLUB AGM

Following the AGM of the Durban Amateur Radio Club held on 3 March 2018 at 87 Tara Road, Bluff, the new committee portfolios were announced:

Chairman: Louis de Bruin, ZS5LP Vice Chairman: Neil Slogrove, ZR5NAS Treasurer: Louis de Bruin, ZS5LP Secretary: Kurt Linsin, ZS5KL Members: Graham Walker, ZS5GW, Aubrey Worthington, ZS5ACW, Sean Beukes, ZS5TI, Eva Denham, ZS5DE and Mark Weeks, ZS5WEE.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to remain at very low levels. There are currently no sunspots visible and no flaring activity is expected. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. The 15 to 30 m bands will provide lots of DX fun. Please visit the web site spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a Diary of some upcoming events:

Ending at 10:00 UTC this morning the SARL VHF/UHF Analogue Contest and the 82nd RSGB Commonwealth Contest 12 March bookings open for the AMSATSA Space Symposium and the closing date for Hamnet contest logs 17 March the SDR Workshop at the NARC 19 March - the closing date for VHF/UHF Analogue contest logs 20 March - Autumn Equinox and the International Day of Happiness 24-25 March the CQ WPX SSB Contest 5 April the SARL 80 m QSO Party 7 April the RaDAR Challenge 7 to 8 April

the SARL VHF/UHF Digital Competition 13 to 15 April the SARL National Convention in Pretoria

To conclude our bulletin a quick overview of our main news item:

It is important that SARL members book their accommodation for the National Convention weekend as soon as possible to avoid any disappointment. Farm Inn has various accommodation types available from Deluxe to Economy rooms at various rates. There is still ample accommodation available for the weekend and members are requested to mention that they are attending the SARL AGM when making their booking. Upon confirmation received this morning, it can be confirmed that there is still ample accommodation available over the weekend and members are urged to ensure they book their accommodation sooner rather than later. Accommodation can be booked online at www.farminn.co.za or by phone on +27 12 809 0266/77.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio program, 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 4 895 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentechn sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Emile Venter, ZS6V, edited by Dennis Green, ZS2B, and read by

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

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